ABSTRACT

Described is a system and method in which client-side tracking mechanisms allow a computing device to efficiently decide which messages need to be downloaded from a server for

5 subsequent filtering evaluation, and request only those messages. For example, the present invention may be used to limit a download of POP3 email messages to those received in the last *n* days. When a message is downloaded that does not meet user-specified filtering criteria such as a date window, the

10 message data is discarded, but the state of that message as not meeting the criteria is preserved in an already-checked table. On a subsequent data request, the received list of unique message IDs is checked against the main message store and the checked table, and message data only downloaded if the unique ID

15 is not found. Messages that are not listed are removed from the message store or the checked table.